

**SUPER SPECIAL
THE DARK
CRYSTAL**

STAR BLASTER

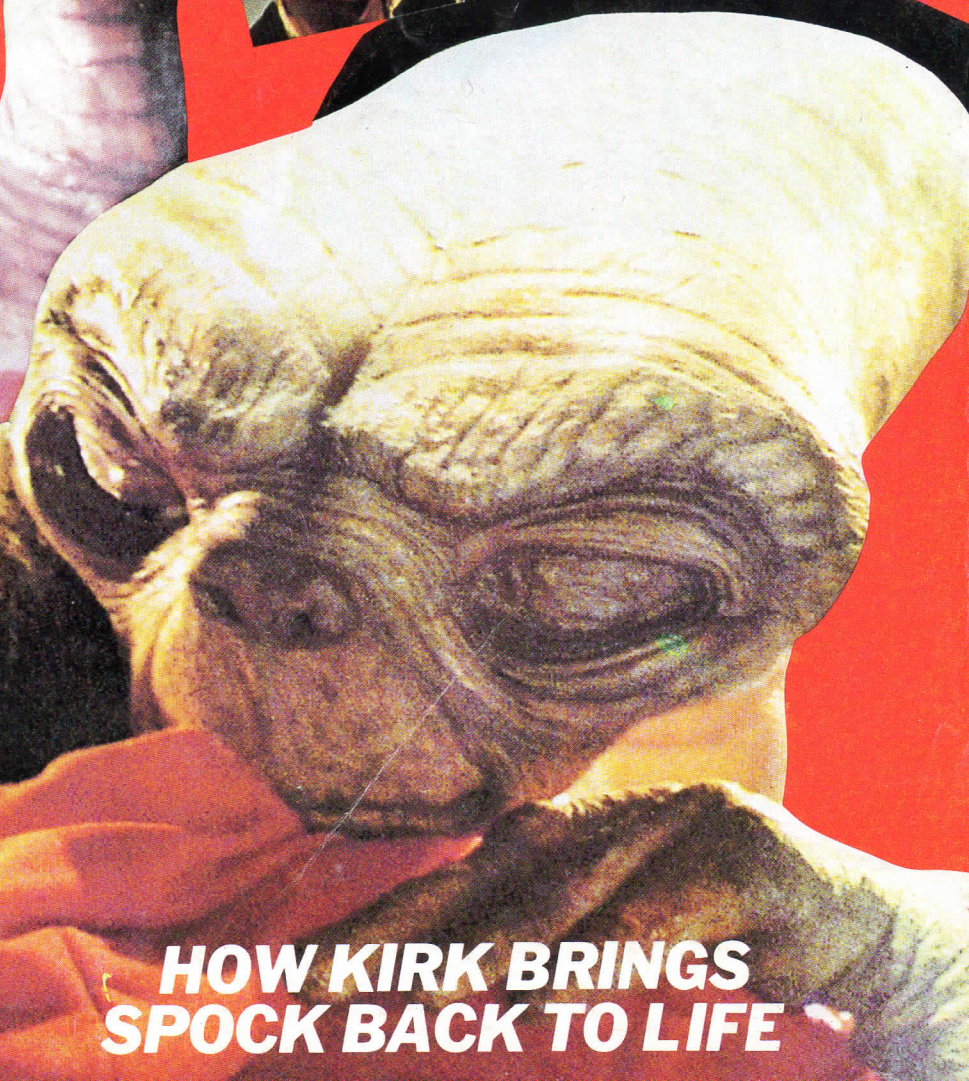
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E.T.
GIVES HIS
LIFE TO
SAVE ELLIOTT

**REVEALED:
THE MYSTERY
JEDI KNIGHT**

**HOW TO BECOME
A VIDEO
GAME
CHAMP**



**HOW KIRK BRINGS
SPOCK BACK TO LIFE**



STAR BLASTER



MARCH 1983

CONTENTS

VOL. 1, NO. 2

The Mystery Knight Revealed!
Return of the Jedi..... 6

E.T. Saves the Earth..... 14

SCI-FI Films Past and Present..... 22

Spock Lives Once More!..... 28

Raiders II
The Return of Indiana Jones..... 34

The Creeps of Creepshow..... 40

The World of "Dark Crystal"..... 42

How to Become a Video Game Champ..... 48

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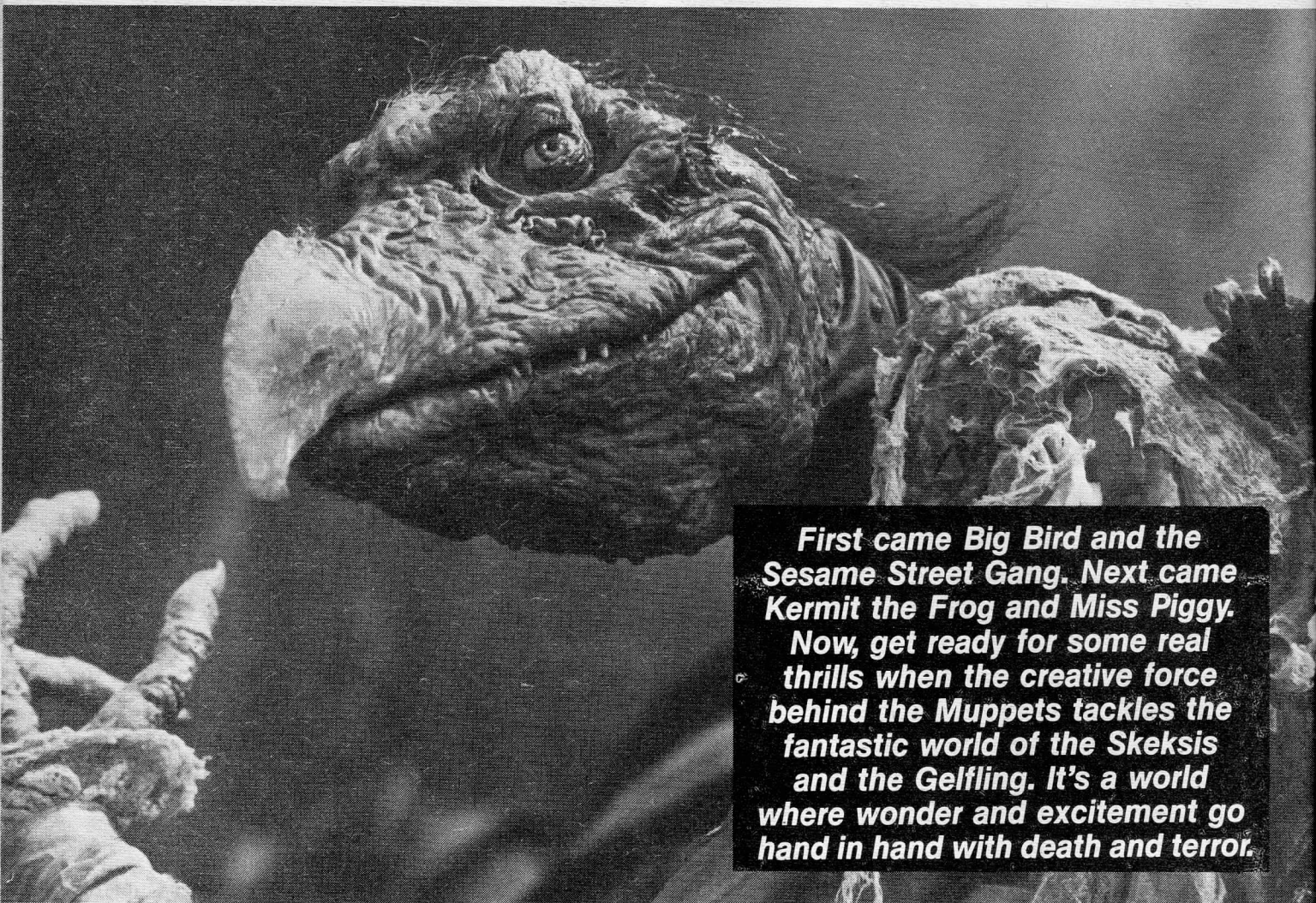
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THE WORLD OF "DARK CRYSTAL"



First came Big Bird and the Sesame Street Gang. Next came Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy. Now, get ready for some real thrills when the creative force behind the Muppets tackles the fantastic world of the Skeksis and the Gelfling. It's a world where wonder and excitement go hand in hand with death and terror.

The evil race of Skeksis rule the world of the Dark Crystal with an iron fist.

Many moons ago, fantasy and science fiction were realms for only the mind. Rarely did people speak of things not material; fantasy was for children, or the child-like.

As society progressed, those forward thinking peoples went into the forefront of society: H.G. Wells, Jules Verne, and other writers became respected for their thinking. Fantasy writers such as J.R.R. Tolkien and his world of Hobbits had a cult, underground following for years.

After the second World War, and the birth of the Atom Bomb, the

public began to take science-fiction and fantasy seriously. After all, the atom bomb had been a thing of imagination. Now, it was reality, as all its destructive power was demonstrated.

The fifties progressed, as film began to reflect this attitude of fantasy and the BOMB. The world was no longer a safe place. Death and destruction could come from anywhere. So, creatures from the mind of filmmakers began to unfold across the silver screens of the world. But not Frankenstein and Dracula, distinctly man-sized monsters, but huge, uncontrollable creatures of the night

(and day). These were *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*, *Them*, *The Thing*, *Tarantula*, *The Giant Claw*, *The Giant Behemoth* and *Godzilla*, to name but a few.

As the sixties unfolded, paranoia turned to Camelot, as the age of Kennedy created an aura of good feeling. Fantasy Films began to look a bit less imposing. Some of the monsters were not only less frightening, but actually benign. Films such as *The Magic Sword*, *Jack the Giant Killer*, *Darby O'Gill and the Little People* and *Gulliver's Travels* all had creatures who in some cases, were downright nice.

After the Kennedy assassination,



Kira and Jen are the last of the Gelflings and are marked for death by the Skeksis.

Ursu the Master, wisest of the Urru, has raised Jen from a baby.





The Pod People shelter Jen from an attack of the Garthim.

the age of fantasy was over. The late sixties offered few fantasy films, aside from leftovers like *Seven Faces of Dr. Lao* and *Valley of Gwangi*. The world was in turmoil, protests galore. There was too much reality to face.

Meanwhile, in the midst of all this, a puppeteer named Jim Henson was manipulating his furry friend, Rowlf, on a show called *The Jimmy Dean Show*. Children were staying up late on Thursdays to watch the antics of this strange puppet, called a *muppet*.

Over the years, Henson and his

muppets would become famous, more characters such as Miss Piggy and Kermit would be introduced.

One day, a program named *Sesame Street* was announced for the Public Broadcasting System. This revolutionary concept would mate existing television technology and education, hopefully to help educate pre-school children.

So, by watching television, it was hoped that children could learn their ABCs, and come fully prepared for kindergarten.

Henson's muppets were the inte-

gral part of this concept. New characters by Henson would aid in the education process (not to mention the millions of merchandising bucks that would eventually arise from the Sesame Streeting of America).

Big Bird would eventually become so famous that the character would become a media celebrity in Communist China.

On the film front, a film in 1977 changed the way that movies were viewed (and made) from the time it was released, until at least the end of the eighties. That Film—*Star Wars*.



Star Wars opened up a whole new world for films. The story of people a long time ago and far far away excited the imagination of millions world wide. At the same time, the Video revolution was beginning, as the dawn of computers and Video Games.

All these factors linked up at the same time, to change the way people entertained themselves, and what they entertained themselves with.

Over the years since, nine of the top ten films have been fantasy films. *Superman*, *Close Encounters*, *The*

Muppet Movie...

Henson had moved his base of operation from New York to England, where he produced the incredibly successful Muppet T.V. show and his two fantastic muppet films, *The Muppet Movie* and *The Great Muppet Caper*. But in Henson's mind he had another plan. A plan that would revitalize films the way *Star Wars* had years previously.

A film totally without human actors.

Could it be done?

The Answer—Yes!

It was to be an adventure story like no other ever filmed. It would combine film and fantasy like no other. There would be no reality as we see it, but a world totally created on Kodak film.

It would be the World of the *Dark Crystal*.

This was a project that Henson had prepared 25 years of his life for. Through film and television, programs like *Saturday Night Live*, *The Today Show*, *The Tonight Show*, *The Ed Sullivan Show* his creatures of foam rubber and plastic had become heroes to millions of youngsters around the world. In order to create completely a new world of the unknown, he decided to find new, strange talent. He decided upon English artist Brian Froud, whose work was what Henson was looking for.

Frank Oz, for whom Henson has depended on from very nearly the beginning, joined him as co-director and associate producer.

Gary Kurtz, producer of *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, joined as co-producer.

Under their direction a group of brilliant artists, designers, puppeteers, and technicians of the Henson outfit have joined together to bring to the screen unparalleled entertainment.

Out of time and place the world of the *Dark Crystal* is strange and beautiful with a dark and deadly secret. It is a world of fantasy and imagination where the forest and the swamp world breed danger and mystery. Creatures strange beyond scope crawl, slither and talk in weird languages. Plant and Tree have the ability to speak. The very air is alive with danger, as this is the *World of the Dark Crystal*.

For his fantastic "*Dark Crystal*" project, Jim Henson assembled some of the finest creative talent in films today. For film design, he turned to Brian Froud, best known for his best-

selling illustrated book on Faeries, which was made into a TV special last year. Froud has imbued the film with rich, fantastic backgrounds, unlike anything ever seen before.

David Odell, the scriptwriter, has been weaving movie stories since he graduated Harvard in 1968. His best known work is probably "Between Time and Timbuktoo," a television show he wrote with Kurt Vonnegut for public TV which is still fondly remembered by Sci-Fi fans all over. He first began working with Henson on the Muppet Show, writing many episodes before graduating to the big screen and authoring "*The Muppet Movie*."

Real science fiction fans will recognize the name of Roy Field, director of special effects for "*Dark Crystal*". It is his special magic which makes the characters in the film come alive. Sometimes it is difficult to believe that they are essentially puppets and not living, breathing beings.

Field is responsible for many of the special effects on the early James Bond films and he won an Oscar for his work on "*Superman*."

Beyond the mountains and wilderness, across the vast and hostile desert, rising above a landscape that is lifeless, sits the castle of the *Dark Crystal*. The ancient and turreted castle was once a shining and wonderful place, now, it is filthy with the decay of evil.

Once again, the story of the *Dark Crystal* is one of a place "long ago and far away". A land neither here nor there, east or west, north or south, a place where no man has gone before. Here, the land is dominated by an evil breed called the *SKEKSIS*.

At one time, a group of exalted thinkers and creators ruled the land from a glittering castle in the heart of which a great Crystal glowed with power gathered from the world's three suns. But a thousand years ago, terrible and mysterious convulsions shook the planet. The Crystal cracked and darkened, the reign of the Skeksis began, and gradually the castle, the land, and its new rulers degenerated until all became dominated by greed and decay.

The corrupted Crystal became the key to the Skeksis power and the center of their strange rituals. As the story begins, a mighty astronomical occurrence is about to begin. If it is allowed to proceed uninterrupted, the rule of the Skeksis will continue for eternity.



Before dying, Ursu, sets Jen upon the task which will save the world.

The castle is guarded by *Garthim*, fierce warriors encased in shell-like armor who enforce the rule of the *Skeksis*. There is only one thing the *Skeksis* fear—an ancient prophecy that the *Gelfling*, a race of elfin creatures will somehow destroy their power.

To save their dynasty, these evil rulers have tried to eradicate the *Gelfling* race and believe they have succeeded. But not known to them, one *Gelfling* boy, *Jen*, was saved from

the *Garthim*'s claws. Plucked from death, he has been raised by the *Urru*, a clan of strange, unworldly and impractical mystics, for the day he will be assigned the task of discovering the secret of the *Dark Crystal* and restoring its light...and freedom to the world.

Jen is brought up by *Ursu the Master*, wisest of the *Urru*, certain Jen is the last of his race. Of course he is so wrong.

His sheltered life is shattered by

the death of the *Master*, who with his last breath, sets Jen forth on a task. He shows him the image of a small shard of crystal and tells Jen this must be found and returned to its rightful place before the imminent *Grand Conjunction* when the world's three suns will come together as one. If Jen fails, all things whole and good will forever be destroyed.

Even as *Jen's URRU* master lies dying, so too does the *Emperor* of the *Skeksis* creating within their



ranks rivalry, anger, and dismay. In a power struggle between the strongest of the Skeksis, the *Chamberlain* and the Garthim Master, the Chamberlain loses his challenge to win the throne, is stripped of his power, and banished from the land.

Meanwhile, Jen is plummeted from the tranquility of the valley of the *URRU*, is thrust into adventure filled with danger and excitement, as he travels through the *ALIEN* wilderness landscape alive with weird

creatures, strange and chattering monsters, creatures like the Crystal Bat.

In the forest Jen is betrayed by a *Crystal Bat*, who tells the Skeksis he is there. Terrified that the ancient prophecy will be fulfilled, they send their Garthim warriors to track Jen down and destroy him.

Reaching the astonishing observatory of *Aughra* the astronomer, Jen finds the crystal shard and learns something of his destiny.

The terrible Garthim attack and to escape, Jen plunges into the swamp, lost and frightened by creatures of bizarre appearance. There, Jen is astonished to meet *KIRA*, a Gelfling girl, and realize that another of his kind is still alive.

Kira has been sheltered by the *Pod People*, simple peasants who live hidden in the depths of the forest. She guides Jen to her village; and during a happy feast Jen is so entranced that he wants to abandon his quest and stay forever with Kira.

However, this moment of niceness and happiness is destroyed by a Garthim attack. Some of the Pod People are captured for transportation to the castle, becoming slaves to the Garthim.

Jen and Kira flee into the forest where Jen, believing himself at fault, vows to give up his job. He and Kira stumble into the ruins of an old Gelfling village. Wall carvings tell the story of the Gelfling prophecy and Jen and Kira discover the true meaning of the crystal shard and the importance of Jen's mission.

From the corner of his eye, Jen spies someone, or something watching—waiting. Jen raises his blaster weapon. He turns to fire—and sees that the creature watching is one of the Skeksis!

It is the Chamberlain! The outcast Skeksis surprises them and offers his hand, promising friendship in place of fear. Jen is tempted, but Kira is quick to mistrust. She urges Jen to heed his Master's dying words and reject the Chamberlain.

The confrontation hardens Jen's resolve and he is determined to return the shard to the Dark Crystal. On strange, long legged beasts that Kira has befriended called *Landstriders*, they race at incredible speeds to the castle. In a vicious fight with the Garthim guarding the entrance Jen and Kira are forced over the cliff and fall to the base of the castle, where, dragging themselves over the mountainous rubbish, they find an entrance through the castle sewers.

Climbing up through the sewers they come face to beak with the disgraced Chamberlain. Once more he tries to persuade them to come with him, but when he is again disgraced, he attempts to kill Jen and drags Kira to the council chamber. The Garthim Master orders her taken to the Scientist's laboratory where she will be drained of her life-force. Imprisoned among hundreds of creatures of the

(Continued on page 62)

DARK CRYSTAL

forests and the fields Kira calls on all her powers and incites them to break out of their cages to freedom.

With time running out Jen fights his way to the *Crystal Chamber*. There, the Dark Crystal floats, shining purple, and the castle dome is

open to the sky where the three Suns are poised to form the Great Conjunction. The Skeksis gather for their power rejuvenation; and Jen in one final desperate effort lunges forward to try to complete his quest and free his world.

Like the *Wizard of Oz* and *Robin Hood*, the Dark Crystal is filled with the things that ancient fairy tales are made of. A hero, a quest and a world that has to be saved.